

## IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

## What Church Folk Are Thinking About and Doing

The Rights of the Ready—The International Sunday School Lesson for October 2 is "The Wise and Foolish Virgins." Matt. 25:1-13.

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS.

The most serious defect in American life is, to use the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, lack of oil, our young people face the future unprepared. Germany and Japan may both be taken as examples of preparedness. The latter won a great war almost, as Mr. Kennan's happy phrase puts it, "by prearrangement." Japan was ready, Russia was not. Germany is today the bogey man of Europe because her neighbors, and especially England, see her prepared to a degree which they have not begun to attain. In the case of the individual, as well as of the nation, this holds true; the individual German looking forward to a business career, undergoes a preparatory training almost incredible to American youth. They learn foreign languages. In any store of even moderate pretensions in Berlin some one speaks English and probably also French and Italian.

America has given the world dazzling instances of success by haphazard; chance and luck are the goddesses oftener invoked. The thorough training and equipment which are as reservoirs of oil for the lights of the long night are not esteemed as highly as they ought to be. The businessman who watches world trends, and who looks to the inevitable tomorrow for his greatest rewards, is the exception rather than the rule. The mechanic who is master of the position next above him, as well as of his own, is the exception, rather than the rule. The reporter who can write an editorial or make up the day's issue of his paper is not the average man. The teacher who knows his branch thoroughly, is not to be found in every school. The preacher who, disdaining commonplaces, conventionality and clap-trap, has pursued his calling to a mastery of the ripest religious thought, and a personal, present experience of vital religion is not in every pulpit. The housewife to whom home-making is a science carefully conned is not the treasured possession of every husband. In a word, lack of oil—failure of preparation—is a real blight upon the life of today.

## The Familiar Story.

The Wise Teacher, whose counsels always outran their immediate application, incorporated this philosophy in a story that was well within the experience of his hearers. It was of a wedding and of the festal procession to meet the bridegroom. Ten young women to bear the lamps before the bridegroom, whose coming they awaited. All had oil enough for immediate use; had the bridegroom come at once there would have been no attendants shut out of the feast. But only five of the ten took oil for a possible long wait. So while the bridegroom tarried, all slept—and we may be sure that those who were prepared for emergency slumbered most soundly and peacefully.

At midnight arose the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom!" Life's opportunities come at most unexpected times. Only the ready can accept them. Five of the waiting virgins had reservoirs of extra oil; five had only burned-out lamps. Foolishly, they wanted the wise to give up their supply, which would have left all in darkness and the bridegroom unhonored. One person may not impart his preparation to another. In life's extremities we cannot share our fitness. Character is not transferable. One cannot pass another's examinations or give him proficiency in his work, or transfer health to him. In the judgment days that are forever confronting us each must stand alone. The unready must endure their own defeats; although, alas, the unfitness of one affects many; for the bridegroom was robbed of honor by the failure of the foolish virgins' oil. They were shut out, but the loss was his as well as theirs.

Of course, the foolish virgins meant well. They made very plausible excuses to their friends, along with their complaints; who ever knew the failures of life to lack for excuses? Is there any spectacle in life more pathetic than these well-meaning people who are unfit—who have all the good intentions in the world, but no practical sense of how to do the right thing? The maidens really wanted to honor the bridegroom just as the shiftless Christians really want to give money to God's work and to do service for him; but they have only futile regrets to offer, instead of foresighted readiness.

## Every Day a Judgment Day.

The point of the whole lesson is that of preparedness. "Be ye also ready," is the best counsel that can be given to youth. For the ready reign. Preparation prevails. Training triumphs. The fit survive. Opportunity is only opportunity to those

HOME OF UNCLE REMUS WILL BE PRESERVED AS MEMORIAL OF AUTHOR WHO MADE BRER RABBIT FAMOUS.

Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 23.—The Uncle Remus Memorial Association, of Atlanta, of which Mr. A. M. D. White is president, and of which President Taft, former President Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie and Harry W. H. Wood are honorary vice-presidents, is raising money to preserve the Atlanta home of the late Joel Chandler Harris as a memorial. Ever since the death of Uncle Remus on July 3, 1908, his home known far and wide as "Swamp Water" has been the mecca of hundreds of pilgrims who knew his tales. Colonel Roosevelt has arranged an invitation to speak at Atlanta October 8 for the benefit of the association, and the money derived from his lecture will be added to the fund started by Andrew Carnegie with a check for \$5,000. The house is now owned by the estate of the dead author, and is valued at more than \$25,000. Several wealthy persons offered to buy the place and give it to the association, but the people of Atlanta thought as Uncle Remus was known and beloved by all, all should be allowed to have a part in the purchase.

## UNCLE REMUS.

And many a moon  
Will wax and wane  
Before we see  
His like again.

The rabbit will hide  
As he always hid,  
And the fox will do  
As he always did.

But who can tell  
What they are  
Since I'm so young  
Has passed away.



who are ready for it; there is no work in life so important as that of preparation. For several decades the international Young Men's Christian Association leaders concentrated their energies upon the college men, to win them to Christianity and leadership; now they say that the religious character of young men is not determined in the college, but in the preparatory and high schools. We cannot begin too early to make ready for life's highest mission.

Oberammergau has been the world's greatest mecca during the past summer. Hundreds of thousands of travelers have gone to it from every corner of civilization. All have departed amazed and awe-filled at the marvelous skill and beauty and artistic ability of this representation of the greatest of dramas by a company of simple Bavarian villagers. The explanation is simple, and to be given in one word: Preparation. The whole village lives under the dominance of the thought of this decennial representation. To make ready for it, to become worthy of a part in the play, is the supreme ambition of every inhabitant of the place. Thus the Christus grows into his part by a life of lowly goodness. Because they are under the mastery of a great ideal they become great; preparation transforms uncouth villagers into actors whose equal, as a whole, cannot be found in the theatres of New York, or London, or Paris, or Berlin. The whole world, as Emerson said, makes a beaten path to the door of the man who knows how to do anything better than anybody else.

## Facing the Inevitable.

Some persons put their heads under the bedcovers when an alarm comes in the night. Ostrich-wise, they try to ignore danger rather than meet or avert it. The better way is to face the inevitable. This parable which Jesus told has two principal points. One is that there is a sure day of judgment, when the Son of Man holds all to an accounting. He means it to be a time of icy meetings and recognitions, and so he pictures it in the guise of a wedding festival. But the main teaching is that, however long

it may be delayed, the coming is sure. Men may engross themselves in material pursuits, and for a time forget the unescapable reckoning with God. But the coming is as sure as its hour is unpredictable.

Therefore—and this is the second lesson of the parable—watch by being ready. They who are ready for God are ready for anything else. All who are truly prepared for death are most effectively prepared for life. Watching for the Lord is not any such silly performance as was witnessed at Duxbury a few months ago, when a group of poor, ignorant fanatics waited in ascension robes at a certain hour for the coming of Christ. Jesus does not want to find his friends idly looking into heaven for him; he would rather find them busy about his tasks, in his spirit among men and women whom he loved. Working is best watching.

## Ready for Tomorrow.

The Boy Scout movement, which is the most hopeful sign upon the British horizon, is taking hold in America. Its genius is one with the teaching of this parable: be ready. The Boy Scout is turned to self control and vigilance and helpfulness; and it is really amazing the frequency with which the British press reports the Boy Scouts on the spot in time to effect rescues and prevent accidents. On one occasion they even saved an airship and its master, who had by mistake fallen on the edge of a precipice. It is not that Boy Scouts have more opportunities than other boys, but simply that they are ready for those which come. John J. Ingalls, a brilliant, though superficial statesman, would be forgotten except for the one vital word he has written, his lines upon "Opportunity."

"Master of human destiny  
Fame, love and fortune wait  
Steps wait  
Cities and fields to the conqueror  
Deserts and seas to the victor  
by  
Hovel and mart and palace  
late  
I knock unbidden  
gate!  
If sleeping, wake up  
fore  
I turn away. It is the hour of day  
And they who follow me  
state  
Mortals desire, and I am not  
Save death, I am not  
or hesitate  
Condemned to failure  
woe  
Seek me in vain and  
more!

I answer not, and I am not  
Equally among all  
demand for reading  
row. An unwelcome  
noted among the  
Will this event  
preparation for the  
tomorrow? The  
fessional erec-  
will the informed  
disinterested laymen  
their place? Are  
of today getting  
facts and factors  
gious life and service  
really lead in the  
row? No shallow  
suffice; the foolish  
sort of inadequate  
The trained layman  
conditions of today  
self to speak  
finds himself  
and religion. The  
is filling his